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Subpart A—Policies, Applicability, and Definitions

§ 170.1 What does this part do?

This part provides rules and a funding formula for the Department of the Interior (DOI) in implementing the Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) Program. Included in this part are other Title 23 programs administered by the Secretary and implemented by tribes and tribal organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, as amended (ISDEAA).

§ 170.2 What is the IRR Program and BIA Road Maintenance Program policy?

(a) It is the policy of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Transportation (Secretaries) to do the following in relation to the IRR and BIA Road Maintenance Programs:

- (1) Provide a uniform and consistent set of rules;
- (2) Foster knowledge of the programs by providing information about them and the opportunities that they create;

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(3) Facilitate tribal planning, conduct, and administration of the programs;

(4) Encourage the inclusion of these programs under self-determination contracts or self-governance agreements;

(5) Make available all contractible administrative functions under self-determination contracts or self-governance agreements; and

(6) Implement policies, procedures, and practices in consultation with Indian tribes to ensure the letter, spirit, and goals of Federal transportation programs are fully implemented.

(b) Where this part differs from provisions in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (ISDEAA), this part should advance the policy of increasing tribal autonomy and discretion in program operation.

(c) This part is designed to enable Indian tribes to participate in all contractible IRR and BIA Road Maintenance programs. The Secretary of the Interior will afford Indian tribes the flexibility, information, and discretion to design roads programs under self-determination contracts and self-governance agreements to meet the needs of their communities consistent with this part.

(d) The Secretaries recognize that programs, functions, services, and activities, regardless of how they are administered, are an exercise of Indian tribes' self-determination and self-governance.

(1) The tribe is responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of its contracted Federal programs, functions, services, and activities.

(2) The tribe accepts responsibility and accountability to the beneficiaries under self-determination contracts and self-governance agreements for:

(i) Use of the funds; and

(ii) Satisfactory performance of all activities funded under the contract or agreement.

(3) The Secretary will continue to discharge the trust responsibilities to protect and conserve the trust resources of tribes and the trust resources of individual Indians.

(e) The Secretary should interpret Federal laws and regulations to facilitate including programs covered by

this part in the government-to-government agreements authorized under ISDEAA.

(f) The administrative functions referenced in paragraph (a)(5) of this section are contractible without regard to the organizational level within the Department of the Interior that carries out these functions. Including IRR Program administrative functions under self-determination contracts and self-governance agreements does not limit or reduce the funding for any program or service serving any other tribe.

(g) The Secretary is not required to reduce funding for a tribe under these programs to make funds available to another tribe.

(h) This part must be liberally construed for the benefit of tribes and to implement the Federal policy of self-determination and self-governance.

(i) Any ambiguities in this part must be construed in favor of the tribes so as to facilitate and enable the transfer of programs authorized by 23 U.S.C. 202 and title 25 U.S.C.

§ 170.3 When do other requirements apply to the IRR Program?

IRR Program Policy and Guidance Manuals and directives apply to the IRR Program only if they are consistent with this part and 25 CFR parts 900 and 1000. See 25 CFR part 900.5 for when a tribe must comply with other unpublished requirements.

§ 170.4 What is the effect of this part on existing tribal rights?

This part does not:

(a) Affect the sovereign immunity from suit enjoyed by tribes;

(b) Terminate or reduce the trust responsibility of the United States to tribes or individual Indians;

(c) Require a tribe to assume a program relating to the IRR Program; or

(d) Impede awards by other agencies of the United States or a State to tribes to administer programs under any other law.

§ 170.5 What definitions apply to this part?

AASHTO means the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.